

EDUCATIONAL REFORM. THE IMPROVEMENT OF OUR SYSTEM OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The Duties of Property.—No. 2.

Admit, for argument's sake, what is most emphatically untrue in fact, that a tax for educational purposes is paid exclusively by property-holders, and, nevertheless, such a tax can be proved to be equitable. The enjoyment of property is due to the existence of society and to the prevalence of certain social and economic principles that favor the property-holders; and he, therefore, owes a debt of duty to that society which, in its constitution, is the source of his independence and his happiness. Upon this fact is founded the right of society, as such, to have every species of property, not only for political, but for social purposes. It is incumbent upon the rich to do social and religious and educational institutions, as a voluntary and delightful use of the means that Providence, through society and its workings and its laws, has put at their disposal. They should second every good work projected by those who study the good of their fellow men, and who suggest plans of social improvement. They should ever be ready to act as the right hand of philanthropy to bring all of its yearnings to a successful consummation. Like the heart of the body, they should circulate the life-blood to refresh and invigorate the other members, and place them under the direction of the head. To them must great institutions look; to them, in their individual, voluntary action, for support and encouragement. Without their co-operation, civilization must retrograde. And it is an honor to human nature that this claim of society upon its more prosperous members has, in England and in America, but more particularly at the North, been abundantly acknowledged and most nobly met. The Cooper Institute, Cornell's University, Girard College, the Peabody Institute, and hundreds of other lesser endowments, proclaim the unselfishness and the magnanimity of conscientious men. Every church, too, that lifts its spire to the skies points the same great moral, and reads the same pleasing lesson of duty acknowledged, and duty in a measure performed.

But the interest of education must not be left to voluntary contributions alone. Society is so constructed, socially and economically, that "to him that hath (property, or reputation, or a thriving business, shall be given; and to him that hath not, shall be taken away even what (the chances of doing better) he seemeth to have." Deny it who may, this law of spiritual life, stated by our Saviour, pervades the universe in all of its parts. The rich man, with equal brains and character, will far outstrip the poor man in the race of fortune. The successful physician or lawyer will bear off the palm of a good business practice from the equally accomplished medical or legal brother, whose merits are not yet known, and who has not yet met with success. To whom do people in distress go? To the good doctor and to the good lawyer—not to the man as yet untired, except through necessity. The whole structure of society favors, not those who have not, but those who already have. Were this the place to do so, it could be shown how wise and admirable an arrangement this is, what a spur to exertion, how conservative and at the same time truly progressive it is, how exactly suited to man's moral nature. But this is not the direct object of this paper. It is rather to press the point that those who have, owe much to the society which does so much for them, which, by its constitution and the normal working of its laws, lifts them to wealth, power and influence, as princes and rulers of the world. What they have they get from, or at least by occasion, of society. Society does not grudge it. No sober man would take it away. But they should contribute of it towards the education and consequent happiness of that society to which they owe it. They should often lend, not expecting to receive again. They should freely give to the deserving, yes, and to the undeserving, too; to the good and the evil; to the just and the unjust. And no property-holder should demur to benefiting himself by educating the people, nor to benefiting the people by the payment of an educational tax; even though it did not benefit himself and his children, in a thousand ways, some of which, but only some, can be reduced to the rough standard of a profit in dollars and cents, but others of which can only be adequately appreciated by him who studies man in the light of that searching question, "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

QUEEN VICTORIA'S FANCIES.

Her Extraordinary Hallucination in Regard to the Late Prince Consort.

Whatever may be the truth in regard to the report that Queen Victoria intends to abdicate the throne of England, it is known that she has been laboring for some years past under at least one phase of mental infirmity. There is a firm conviction that Prince Albert is always present with her, and that she can hold communion with him. Her private rooms are arranged as they were when he was alive. His chair and books are placed about her as they were when he was alive. His private affairs herself; to reduce all unnecessary expenditures, and to forbid extravagance. Hence the greatest simplicity is observed at the Queen's table, and she imagines that her husband looks on, well pleased. At times, when she is more than ordinarily impressed with a sense of his presence, the poor, fond woman will order a knife and fork to be placed on the dinner-table for him, and cause the attendants, as if the master still occupied it. Every morning a pair of boots are cleaned and set down against the door of the chamber which he once occupied, and at breakfast, when in Scotland, she will often sit a long time in silence, waiting for the Prince.

The Queen's strong belief in the communion of the living with the spirits of the dead she received, no doubt, from Prince Albert himself, who was sort of theosophist—a something between Jacob Behmen, the mystic, and J. G. Fichte, the philosopher of transcendentalism. Whatever may be thought of it as a theory of philosophical or religious belief, it is a source of common-sense, and she often talks with the Prince concerning the state of the soul after death. She has been unusually withdrawn from public life for some years past, and lives in a world of her own. Her harp and her casket are both neglected, and she neither sings, plays, nor paints, except at rare intervals, when she will sweep her harp-strings for a few moments in memory of some sweet German air that her husband loved to sing or to hear sung.

"NOT GUILTY."

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